

## Quick Read

### In General

#### Beef products removed

European commissaries are reviewing products which might contain ruminant meat or meat products from Canada, and have removed four frozen items, and two shelf-stable items from commissary shelves. Any customers who have these products at home should not consume them, but should return them to the commissary for a full refund. The products are: Pro Veal Cordon Blue, in the 20 oz package, UPC #621960 60012; Pro Veal Cordon Dianne, in the 20 oz. package, UPC # 621960 60010; Boston Market 16 oz. Chicken Pot Pie, UPC# 071984 04520 (contains gelatin); Tei Pan Beef and Broccoli, UPC#70077 00111; Ragu Rich and Meaty Sausage, Pepper, and Onion Spaghetti Sauce, UPC# 036200013960; and Ragu Rich and Meaty - Mama's Meat Sauce, UPC# 036200013970.

### Belgium

#### Bible school held

Brussels American Chapel hosts Vacation Bible School June 16-20, 5-7:30 p.m., in the chapel at NATO Support Activity. Children 2 years old through sixth grade are encouraged to attend and explore the gallery God has created for them. We are also looking for junior high, high school and adult volunteers to help in the classroom, with arts, crafts and games. For more information or to sign up for VBS come by Brussels American Chapel office or call DSN 368-9677 or commercial 02 717 9677.

### Netherlands and Germany

#### Play staged

The AFNorth Alliance Players stage "Daddy's Dyin' (Who's Got the Will?)" June 6-7, 7 p.m., at AFNorth Theater. Due to content, this play is not recommended for children under 13.



**"Hey! How come everybody else gets Lumpia and Chicken Adobo and I get formula?"**  
Tiffany Lee, 7 months

**The Meteor investigates.**  
See page 4.

**Scads o' grads**  
See pages 2-3.

# Benelux Meteor

Volume 21, Number 11

June 3, 2003

## Earning dividends from force protection exercises

By Rick Haverinen

Being on the receiving end of a force protection exercise is a little like watching the *Our Gang* comedy series when Alfalfa's parents broke out the bottle of castor oil.

It can be a bit hard to swallow but the administration is for a worthy cause.

"I think one has to remember that when we do exercises, they're for a specific purpose," said Steve Michael, 80th Area Support Group Plans Officer. "They're not to cause a nuisance or to make people's lives uncomfortable. They're to prepare us to better conduct our operations in a time of crisis. The people in the community need to understand that this is for a purpose."

The emergency exercise, such as the one conducted on May 19 when the force protection team at 80th ASG put procedures beneath the microscope, could be perceived by some as disruptive. The made-up scenario had a bomb going off in Brussels and sneaky folks lurking around Chièvres Air Base, where a supposed chemical device was eventually exploded. The various fictitious events caused the security level to be raised to delta, and that was a real change, to test how well the switch could be made. For a few hours it became next to impossible to get a vehicle into Daumerie Caserne or Chièvres Air Base.

"The exercise was designed to test a variety of things," Michael said, "to test the operations in the emergency operations center, to test the battle staff, the command group, and the directorates supporting the commander in his decision making and also to exercise and test the quick reaction force. The objective accomplished all of those and we managed to integrate into the entire operation, the participation of the

Securis Guard Force, the Belgian police liaisons, the various directorates, even some of the AAFES employees were involved. Of course



ORIGINAL PHOTO: Sgt. 1st Class William Santoro

our Provost Marshal's office and MPs were involved, and basically everybody on both casernes. We inadvertently also involved the

See **EXERCISE** page 8.

## Installation access system cranks up

By Sandy Aubrey

SCHINNEN, Netherlands – ID cards with microchips and bar coding combined with installation access controlled and verified by using hand-held digital "assistants" at entry gates are not things out of a science fiction movie. This is the new Installation Access Control System (IACS) the U.S. Army and Air Force in Europe are now implementing.

IACS is not just the ID card but

an entire automated system that incorporates multiple records, a bar code, and biometric information that includes a photograph and fingerprint.

Once the system is up and running, ID card checks for entry at installation gates will include card scanning. The system will standardize access control policy and procedures among USAREUR and USAFE installations in Europe.

All personnel possessing an installation pass, including family members, contractors, NATO members and visitors, must be registered in the system by Oct. 1. IACS can produce installation passes for those not having a DOD ID card and who require recurring and unescorted access to military installations in Europe. IACS captures information from the current DoD ID card as well as from the new Com-

mon Access Card (CAC).

"Individuals need to check the back of their ID cards and make sure it has a readable bar code," said Staff Sgt. James Milner, 254th Base Support Bn. physical security NCO. "If (the card) doesn't, then they need to get a new ID card before trying to register in the new system."

See **IACS** page 7.

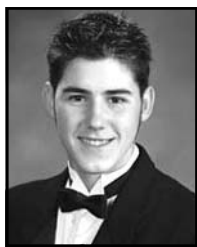


# Brussels American School

## *Class of 2003*



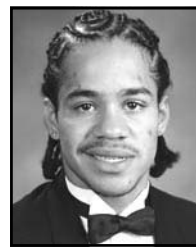
Anda Magurean



Andrew Isbell



Christina Marinou



Dominic Collier



Evmorfili Zouzia



Heather Parker



Jacquelyn Craig



Jelena Horvatic



Joshua Brash



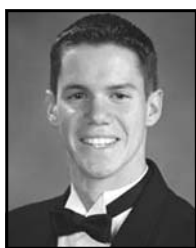
Kate Lloyd



Khalid Ahmad



Martha Epitidiou



Michael Bingham



Morgan Duke



Nevena Ivanova



Remy Fulwood



Robert Blanford



Ryan-James DeSmedt



Sandra Hitz



Sare Sevil



Travis Keeton



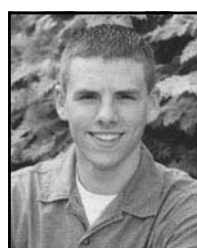
Yuriy Moskvitin

# AFNorth Lions

## *Class of 2003*



Aimee Allan



David Baker



Jillian Aubrey



Tiffany Aubrey



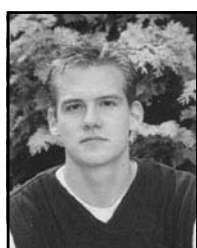
Lauren Bellhouse



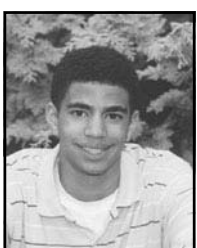
Mike Bettiga



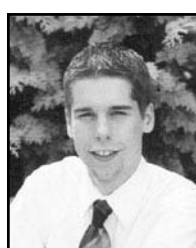
Oliwia Berdak



Ben Blasche



Alex Boettger



Matt Burton



Lisbeth Castillo



Ewa Ceglarski



David Todd Damrel



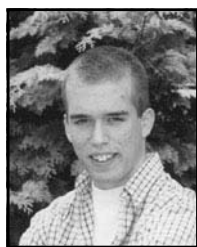
Dan Dowdy



Tianne Eutenier



Tina Felt



Karl Fernett



Mylene Fey



Marie Garbida



Dustin Hintermeister



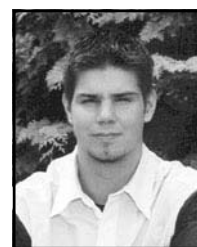
Janessa Hartmann



Louise Hoyrup



Robert Huffaker



Fred Cote



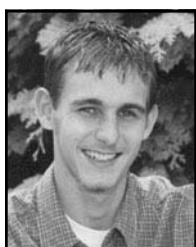
Abigail Huliganga



Erica Jensen



Jeff Johnson



Mateusz Kwicen



Eric Lamontage



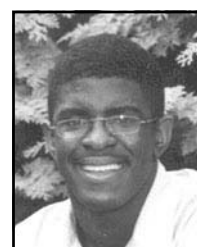
Maresa Mailes



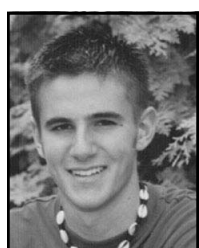
Chris Metaxes



Laura Neunswander



Torrance Nevells



Zach Norman



Ryan O'Rourke



Adria Reznecheck



Fred Riggs



David Shedden



Carlo Soria



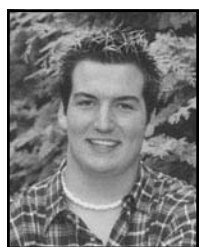
Michael Spacek



Sylvia Wiese



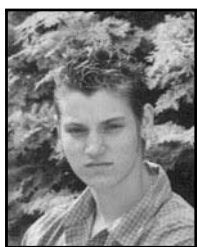
Danielle Zaremba



Garret Stamm



Elisabeth Stowe



Paul Towery



Claire Ward



Maurice Vanderhall



Nick Villahermosa



Chanel Walton



Ashley Weddell



Brett Woodworth

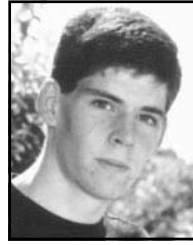


# SHAPE Spartans

## *Class of 2003*



Carmen De la Plaza



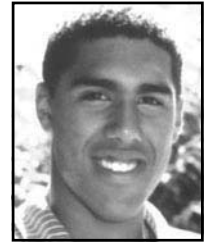
Brendan Corcoran



John Mattox



De Anna Huscher



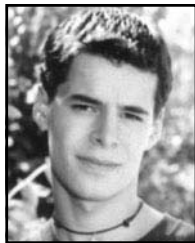
Gilbert Desroches



Andrew McMillan



Julianne Sympson



Lucas Pardo



Stefanie Eytchison



Jeremy Machlay



Paloma Lopez



Jorge Cazorla



Eirini Loukou



Matthew Illerbrun



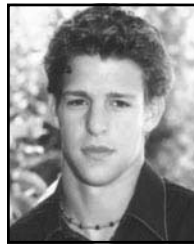
Blake Maberry



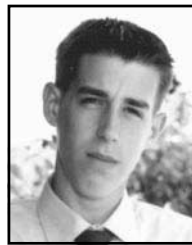
Stephen Williams



Heather Aust



Nicholas Photopoulos



Javier Alejandre



Miray Karabayir



Andras Soltesz



Jorge Soria



Jenna Buckingham



Kendall Taylor



Gediz Aksit



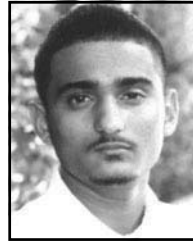
Mikhail Tulabut



Sofia Panagiotou



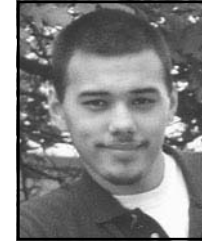
Spyridon Kyriazis



Kalith Scoggins



Denise Doehring



Zachery Johnson



Ilia Ostenberg



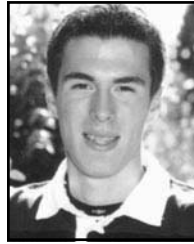
Ondrej Meduna



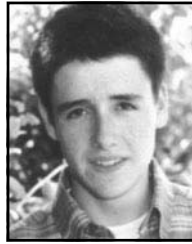
Maciej Grabowski



Katherine Renfro



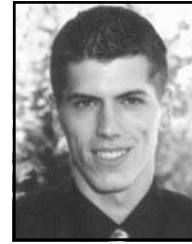
Alexander Martinez



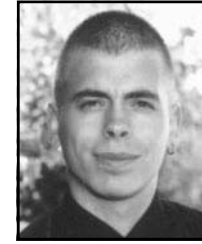
Miguel Gasca



Deborah Platevoet



Tamas Praveczi



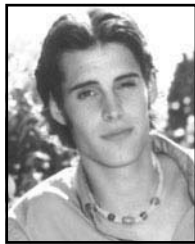
Zoltan Praveczi



Leigh-Ann Ryan



Blanca Sanchez



Jesse Murphy



Todor Roussanov



Chrystal Mahan



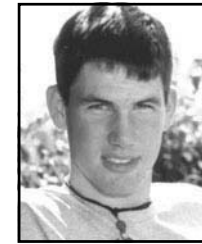
Konrad Dwojak



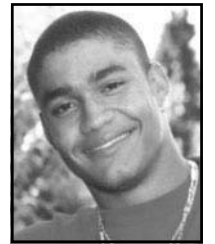
Patrick Hash



Helena Medunova



William Puttman



Gregory Najac



Michal Starobrat



Rafal Starobrat



Amanda Terry



Rafael Martin



Kalvis Liepins



Xanthi Steka



Andromache Palaskas



Nils Hesse



Karol Mazur



Ana Vazquez



Jacek Porebny



Alper Kokmen



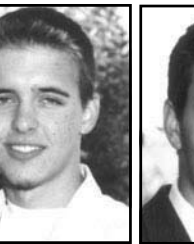
Karolina Narkun



Patrick Edwards



Amanda Jimenez



Daniel Fastenau



Michal Libich



Mae Linh Blake



# Small crew, good food, make friends and influence people



PHOTOS: Rick Haverinen



## Mini celebration has maxi impact

Just a few volunteers made a community celebration for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month May 20 at the PX on Chievres Air Base.

Although they were small in number and their program was minimal, the volunteers attracted dozens of attendees who seemed very interested in trying the ethnic food samples and watching the entertainment.

There were no speeches or award presentations, but the essentials of a good time were present; something to eat and something to see.

Clockwise from above, Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Morales, International Headquarters Command, Staff Support Branch USA, demonstrates "Pandaggo sa Ilaw," or a dance with light.

Sheilla Lee displays the culinary treats: lumpia, pancit, kim chee, chicken adobo, bulgogi and a piece of bibingka for dessert.

Morales, Sheilla Lee and her husband Master Sgt. Leroy Lee, NCOIC at 80th Area Support Group Directorate of Logistics, serve a hungry lunchtime crowd.

Proving that no sock has yet been made that cannot be removed in an instant, the Lee's seven-month old daughter Tiffany quietly amused herself until she had a lunch of baby formula that her father provided, while Mom served the multitude.

Morales and Sheilla Lee prepared the food themselves, and were able to do most of the work the same morning.





# Around the 80th ASG

## AFNorth hosts Division II soccer championship

By Erin Rapach

BRUNSSUM, Netherlands - AFNorth International School hosted the High School Division II European Soccer Championship games May 22-24 and it was anyone's tournament....at first. Each team went in thinking, believing, praying and hoping to take it all.

Seven girls' teams and eight boys' teams battled it out over three days...sweat dripping, hearts racing, everything was left on the field.

Initially the AFNorth boys were undefeated, blowing away every team they met, 3-1, 4-0 in clean sweeps until they lost their third game against Vilseck 4-3. In the game for third and fourth place the AFNorth boys faced Mannheim for the second time in the tournament and lost 5-0. SHAPE faced off against Vilseck defeating them 3-2 at the half, 4-2 for the final.

In the final tally the SHAPE boys' team took first place, Vilseck second, Mannheim came in third and AFNorth was fourth.

The AFNorth girls' team tied their first game against Vilseck and then battled against Patch but lost 3-1. Patch went on to beat Hanau in the final match 4-0.

In the girls' division, Patch took



PHOTO: Jack Higbee

**AFNorth Lady Lion Laura Rivera and Patch Lady Panther Laura Ingold fight for control of the ball during the High School Division II European Championship games May 22-24.**

first place, Hanau second, Vilseck third and SHAPE came in fourth.

All teams played with heart, hustle and skill. At the end of the tournament, the coaches from each team came together and voted for

the All-Tournament Team, the top 13 players of the tournament.

*Erin Rapach is AFNorth International School assistant high school soccer coach.*

### All-Tournament Boys Team

|     |                   |          |
|-----|-------------------|----------|
| 13. | MVP-Rafael Martin | Shape    |
| 12. | Dominik Breuer    | AFNorth  |
| 11. | Gonzalo Alejandro | Shape    |
| 10. | Jon Reilly        | Vilseck  |
| 9.  | Walter Gaffney    | Vilseck  |
| 8.  | Conrad Cablay     | Vilseck  |
| 7.  | Kurtis Kennedy    | AFNorth  |
| 6.  | Tyler Junker      | Mannheim |
| 5.  | Sila Iwuchukwa    | Mannheim |
| 4.  | Nate Mapp         | Patch    |
| 3.  | Jason Ullman      | Patch    |
| 2.  | Robert O'Doherty  | Mannheim |
| 1.  | Steven Trickey    | Hanau    |

### All-Tournament Girls Team

|     |                     |         |
|-----|---------------------|---------|
| 13. | MVP Jessica Russell | Patch   |
| 12. | Patricia Foster     | Hanau   |
| 11. | Christina Cline     | Vilseck |
| 10. | Sarah Starr         | Vilseck |
| 9.  | Kyri Bye-Nagel      | Hanau   |
| 8.  | Ana Vazquez         | Shape   |
| 7.  | Myriam Godmaire     | AFNorth |
| 6.  | Mylene Fey          | AFNorth |
| 5.  | Laura Ingold        | Patch   |
| 4.  | Haley Mitchem       | Patch   |
| 3.  | Julianne Sympson    | Shape   |
| 2.  | Courtney Allen      | Patch   |
| 1.  | Melissa Berrio      | Hanau   |

## New opportunity for child care debuts in Schinnen

By Sandy Aubrey

**SCHINNEN, Netherlands** - The first Family Child Care provider home was inaugurated here May 1 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

This is good news for the community because FCC offers an alternative for child care for those who prefer a home style environment for their children.

The FCC program follows Department of the Army regulations as well as Dutch laws governing child care according to the Status of Forces Agreement with the Netherlands. According to Dutch law, providers are allowed to take care of four children of mixed ages in addition to their own.

The fee structure for the service is the same as the Child Development Service which varies according to income and family members. An added advantage is a flexible schedule

because providers set their hours of operation. In general hours follow those of the Child Development Center (CDC).

Military spouses interested in earning a little extra cash while staying at home with their children are eligible to set up an FCC home service.

The FCC program provides training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, child abuse identification and reporting, business practices, and food and nutrition. Additionally, prospective child care homes are inspected by fire and safety departments, the community health nurse and the FCC director.

"We're a pretty small community and we already have a CDC, but I would like to see about four more providers in our area," said Alice Wirsich, FCC program director.

The FCC provider option is only open to

military spouses who live in government-leased quarters. This has been a challenge because there is no base housing and government-leased housing areas are dispersed over a large area, according to Wirsich.

"We have interested people out there who are qualified and experienced but because they don't live in government-leased quar-

ters they can't participate," Wirsich said.

FCC provider services are open to Tri-border community members including NATO ID card holders.

For more information about registering a child in FCC or setting up an FCC service, call Wirsich at DSN 364-6019 or commercial 045-563-6019.

## Soldiers honored at Margraten ceremony

**MARGRATEN, Netherlands** - The U.S. and Dutch communities came together May 25 to honor men and women who paid the ultimate price for freedom.

The Memorial Day ceremony at the Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten, was attended by high ranking officials and dignitaries of the U.S. and Dutch governments, in addition to thousands of individuals who came to honor the fallen soldiers.

Many of those present were too young to remember World War II, but gratitude and appreciation for those who died in the fight for freedom was passed down to them by those

who remember.

In his speech the Honorable Clifford M. Sobel, U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of The Netherlands, paid homage to the 8,000 of America's military dead buried at Margraten. Reflecting on Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, he said no speech given, no monument built, no wreath laid, can fully convey the gratitude felt for soldiers' sacrifices.

Sobel also pointed out the threats facing the world today and said America is committed to help build a lasting peace around the world while preparing future generations to protect liberty.

### Serving those who gave their lives

With an armload of flags under a steady rain, Tess Holmkuist, 6, a Brownie Scout with AFNorth Troop 4, shows what service is all about as she helps plant flags for the Memorial Day ceremony at Margraten May 25.



PHOTO: Sandy Aubrey



# Around the 80th ASG

## SHAPE and Chievres Community Calendar



PHOTO: Rick Haverinen

### "Noises Off" staged by SHAPE community theater

**Michael Frayn's full-tilt adult farce plays at SHAPE Entertainment Center June 12, 13, 14 and 15, 7:30 p.m. To make reservations call 065 443312.**

ment, please call the 80th ASG Public Affairs Office at DSN 361-5419 or civilian 068-275419.

#### University sets meeting

The University of Phoenix (UoP), a regionally accredited institution, has been awarded a contract by the U.S. Army to provide graduate programs at military installations within the European Command. Their on-site programs will include a Master's of Business Administration (M.B.A.) and a Master's in Education (M.Ed.) Representatives will be at SHAPE Army Education Center, Building 212, Room 120, June 16, 1:30-5 p.m. to meet with any current or potential student. Find out why UoP is the largest private university in the United States. An information session will be held June 16, 6:30-8 p.m. in Room 118 to provide an overview of UoP and their programs as well as to answer any questions. Info: contact the SHAPE Education Center, DSN 423-3466 or civilian 065 443466.

#### July Fourth celebrated

Rides for all ages, face painting, clowns, trivia, music and much more. Fun begins July 4, noon, at SHAPE GB parking lot. Don't miss out on the fireworks display at 11 p.m.

#### Dine Prime Time

Head on out to the Prime Time Lounge on Daumerie Caserne in Chievres Monday-Friday for a hearty meal: Breakfast, 6-9 a.m.; Lunch, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Dinner, 5-8 p.m. Info: Call DSN 361-5540.

#### Newcomers welcomed

ACS Newcomers Briefing is held June 12 and 26, 8:30 a.m.-noon, at Hotel Maisieres. Call Relocation Assistance at Army Community Service for details, 423-4332.

#### Travel services offered

Call SATO travel to book your summer vacation. Airport pick-up & drop-off service also available. Info: 361-5783.

#### Equipment needed

The "Association Mon Quartier" in Ath is organizing a camp out for less fortunate children in the Ath-Bruglette area late July 2003. In order to reduce the cost to a maxi-

mum, they are looking for the following equipment:

- Two tents for 8 persons each in order to accommodate older boys
- sleeping bags
- Jogging suits, jogging shoes,

shorts, t-shirts, rain coats for children 3 up to 15 years old

- Sports equipment: balls, badminton, rollers,....

If you can help by either donate or loan some of the requested equip-

## Brussels Community Calendar

#### Volunteers needed

Patriotism will be at its finest at Brussels American School Sterrebeek July 5, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., with the annual NSA Fourth of July Celebration. The celebration committee is looking for volunteers to help plan now and work the day of the celebration. Anyone wishing to participate can contact Lisa Passalacqua at 02 717-9639 or e-mail at Lisa.Passalacqua@benelux.army.mil

#### Walk and run

5K Firecracker Run/Walk at Teruren Park starting 8 a.m. with registration starting at 7:15 a.m. Open to all US civilians, military and family members. Register with the NSA Fitness Center, 02 717-9652.



**NSA CYS center hosted the "Grand Finale" for parents and community members to see what brilliant things the kids have been up to. Visitors saw photographs taken by the children, the ongoing Safari Park and "My Ideal Backyard" projects, a Lego exposition, a handmade slide show, individual portfolios, a film of the Romeo and Juliet production made by the children and clay animation movies including a behind-the-scenes look of the production. The Cooking Club provided homemade lasagna and snacks.**

#### NSA Library 02 717-9791

NSA Library Summer Reading Program June 22-August 2. Call 02/717-9791 for more information.

#### NSA Sports and Fitness

##### 02 717-9667

Intramural Softball season begins June 17. Open to all Military ID card holders and NATO Staff. Players must be at least 16 years old. There will be a coaches meeting June 12, noon, at NSA Fitness Center.

#### Three Star Lounge

Movie Night every Thursday, 7:15 p.m. with free popcorn.

#### ACS 02 717-9783

Step Families Workshop June 3-5,

11 a.m.-1 p.m., in the old NSA Sanctuary

- Parent-toddler playgroup every Tuesday, 10:30a.m.-noon, at NSA CYS

- Advanced financial seminar every Tuesday 6-8 p.m.

#### Youth Services 02 717-9651 or 9647

- Aikido lessons every Tuesday, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at BAS racquetball court
- CYS Workforce prep classes for summer hire employees June 5, 9, 12, 4-5:30 p.m.
- Summer Camp June 16-August 15. Registration is now underway.

## 254th BSB Community Calendar

#### Basketball camps held

The 254th Base Support Bn. hosts three Youth Services International Basketball Camps July 20-25; July 27-Aug. 1; and Aug. 3-8.

An international coaching staff headed by Henk "The Tank" Pieterse will lead the groups. Medical staff will be on site and there will be a former NBA or European pro mystery guest every week. The camps are open to the U.S. and international community. Cost is \$300 for one week camp. Info: Ann Webber, DSN 360-7444 or civilian 00 31 46 443-7444.

#### Volksmarch scheduled

The AFNorth Tri-border Walking Club holds their annual volksmarch June 8. Starting time is 7:30-noon from at the AFNorth Sports Complex, civ. 0031-46-442-5827.

#### Bowling tourney set

The 254th BSB Bowling Center holds the Heineken Freedom Bowl July 4, 9 a.m. A singles tournament, the entry fee is \$40 per person. First place prize is \$250 and prizes for high game and high series are \$100 each. First cut-off date is June 27, DSN 360-7207.

#### News from the thrift shop

NATO afghans are on sale at Schinnen Thrift Shop. They feature the 19 flags of member nations signifying the "bright future of tomorrow" and they make great gifts. Cost is \$48 or \$45. The Thrift Shop is open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Thursdays, 1-5 p.m. Schinnen Thrift Shop needs volunteers, donations, and consignments. Donations of leftover cleaners, plants, coupons for cleaners, paper towels, and trash bags are appreciated.

## NSA volleyball league winds down



**Five teams participated in the NSA intra-mural volleyball league. The "PSD" team won the tournament after beating the "Slammers" 15-13 in the final best-of-three game. The "Slammers" were the regular season winners.**





*"The halcyon days that I experienced as a child growing up in the 50s and 60s are not something that we're going to see again any time soon."*

**Steve Michael**



ORIGINAL PHOTO: Sgt. 1st Class William Santoro

## EXERCISE from page 1

local gendarmerie, but that's a hazard of exercises."

U.S. military communities are required to stage force protection exercises by various Dept. of the Army, USAREUR and EUCOM regulations. Those directives are driven by many real-world events, the most significant of which happened on Sept. 11, 2001 when terrorist pilots crashed commercial airliners into New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington.

Through the regular staging of force protection exercises, U.S. military communities learn to deal with the unpleasant reality of living in an age of elevated threats.

"The exercise (on May 19) was an attempt to comply with some of that guidance," Michael said. "Also it's a learning curve for new people that have arrived in the command and to test additions or changes we have made to our local force protection plans."

Every play has to have an author and although this exercise had several, many of the details were the brainchild of Sgt. 1st Class William Santoro, the 80th ASG's force protection NCO.

"It was kind of interesting to see the parts that we put in, the way that it actually came out and was acted out in real life and to see how the people responded to the things and the scenarios that we gave them," Santoro said.

Although he was working as an observer the day of the exercise, Santoro said there is an absolute learning opportunity for the planners as well as the

personnel being tested.

"All training is for the benefit of a real life situation," Santoro said. "Whatever type of training it is, you're going to learn from it and use the experience."

Whether things went well or things went poorly you learn from it all and use it later on when you need it."

Santoro said he witnessed reactions that he expected as well as some that surprised him.

"Some of it, it's a pretty natural reaction," Santoro said.

"And what we thought would be a natural reaction turned around when they reacted differently (for instance) when we went to level force protection condition delta a lot earlier than we actually anticipated based on the scenario and the inputs that we gave them."

Every play also has to have a cast of actors, and Michael said this exercise used around a dozen.

"Some of them were designed to simulate infiltrators or suspicious individuals and some of them were designed to simulate casualties," Michael said.

"And the mixture of people pretending to be in certain roles really helped to keep our quick reaction force and the military police on their toes. In fact their procedures were so good that we actually almost didn't get to use some of the role players because they were apprehended almost as quickly as they infiltrated the perimeter. Our Task Force Borinquen National Guard people who are here from Puerto Rico and were aug-

menting the military police did an excellent job of helping to control traffic and also helping to identify and apprehend individuals. It was a team effort by everybody here."

Michael concluded, "The exercise exceeded my expectations and the expectations of a lot of my colleagues... It also demonstrated that we're probably further along in our development of responses to scenarios than we thought we were."

Michael said it's a 21st century fact of life "that the world as we knew it before September 11 continues to change away from the more relaxed atmosphere that we had before. The halcyon days that I experienced as a child growing up in the 50s and 60s are not something that we're going to see again any time soon. I think living with the idea of force protection and anti-terrorism plans and efforts at U.S. installations is going to be something we may see for the rest of our lives."

It's a sobering observation for freedom-loving Americans. Our historic desire for individual liberty is tempered with the new world discipline of increased self-protection. But even in one of the worst real-world scenarios there's an example of measurable success in that mix.

"One of the reasons the casualties were so low at the twin World Trade Center towers in New York City in the 9-11 incident was because they had been doing emergency drills as a result of the bombing attempt back in the 1980's," Michael said, "so because of that, we know that training is important and it will help keep us safe."



Michael



Santoro

# Retirement contributions can ease tax burden

The new Retirement Savings Contribution Credit which is available 2002-2006 could help taxpayers offset the cost of the first \$2,000 contributed to IRAs, 401(k)s and certain other retirement plans.

The Retirement Savings Contributions Credit applies to individuals with incomes up to \$25,000 (\$37,500 for a head of household) and married couples with incomes up to \$50,000.

To take this credit, taxpayers must be at least age 18, not a full-

time student, and not claimed as a dependent on another person's return.

When figuring this credit, taxpayers must subtract the amount of distributions they have received from their retirement plans from the contributions they have made.

This rule applies for distributions starting two years before the year the credit is claimed and ending with the filing deadline for that tax return.

For tax year 2002, the taxpayer would first subtract distributions

received from January 1, 2000, through April 15, 2003, from his or her total 2002 retirement contributions. Then the taxpayer would multiply the result (but not more than \$2,000) by the credit rate that applies to his or her filing status and income level.

The subtraction rule does not apply to distributions that are rolled over into another plan or to withdrawals of excess contributions.

The Retirement Savings Contribution Credit is in addition to what-

ever other tax benefits may result from the retirement contributions. For example, most workers at these income levels may deduct all or part of their contributions to a traditional IRA. Contributions to a 401(k) plan are not subject to income tax until withdrawn from the plan.

Free income tax help is available at the Northern Law Center's Tax Assistance Center from now until June 27, 2003. Taxpayers can file their federal tax returns electronically and can receive assistance fil-

ing their state income tax returns as well as federal and state income tax returns for prior years.

Appointments and walk-ins are available from 09:00 am until 5:00 pm Monday-Friday at SHAPE.

Please call DSN 423-4906 for an appointment at SHAPE. For appointments in Brussels please call DSN 423-4868.

*Information provided by the Northern Law Center from IRS Tax Tip 2003-40*



## Benelux Meteor

## 2003 Publication Dates

| Copy due (noon) | Print Date |
|-----------------|------------|
| Jun 6           | Jun 17     |
| Jun 20          | Jul 1      |
| Jul 4           | Jul 15     |
| Jul 18          | Jul 29     |
| Aug 1           | Aug 12     |

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